



## City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

### Department of Planning and Development

Diane M. Sugimura, Director

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck, Chair, UD&P Committee  
Councilmember Richard Conlin  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

**FROM:** Diane M. Sugimura

**DATE:** May 3, 2005

**SUBJECT:** Committee Briefing: DPD Monthly Update for the May 6, 2005 Meeting

### **Permit System Improvements ... Using Hansen Technology**

After nearly 25 years of hard-working service, DPD's legacy permit tracking system will be replaced with a new state-of-the-art system this year. Unfortunately, we anticipate some short term impacts on turnaround times for our permit applicants. The impacts are anticipated to continue through mid-July. Starting in late April, approximately 250 staff will receive 60-80 hours of training each before we go live.

We've prepared handouts and large posters to let our customers know that our service will be affected, and that we are doing as much as possible to mitigate the impacts. We will keep a close eye on how we are doing and what is working and what is not working. At this point we plan to expand our application drop-off feature, allow more projects to be approved subject-to-field-inspection (STFI), and have extended late afternoon appointments. Technical leads from land use and building code, and some inspectors, will take on some of the plan review duties. And we will increase our use of contract reviewers and overtime.

### **Permit Volumes Remain High**

Permit revenues are anticipated to be about \$1.5 million more than projected when the 2005 budget was prepared. The first quarter saw 27 new Design Review projects. If this pace continues, we would have more than a 40% increase compared with last year (105 compared with 74 in 2004). The Downtown, Capitol Hill and Northeast Design Review Boards continue at full capacity.

### **Enforcing Historic District Requirements**

As a reminder, DPD is the agency responsible for taking formal code enforcement action when staff of the historic preservation program at the Department of Neighborhoods are unable to obtain compliance within designated historic districts. Recent code violation issues referred by DON related to unapproved exterior paint and signage in the Columbia City Landmark District, unapproved sign changes at the Pike Place Market, and unrepaired historic gateposts on a landmark property in the Central Area.

### **Multi-Agency Enforcement Case in the News**

In mid April DPD Code Compliance inspectors participated in a multi-agency inspection at an industrial site along West Marginal Way SW. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Criminal Investigation unit, the state Department of Ecology, the auto theft unit of the Seattle Police Department, and the Seattle Fire Marshal's Office with assistance from the State Patrol, recently conducted inspections pursuant to a search warrant. The owner had been the subject of an earlier illegal-use action by DPD for similar activities at another location in Georgetown.

DPD was contacted because of concern that up to 10 illegal dwelling units might have been found on the premises. We found that only one unit was occupied as a residence; the other "dwelling units" were actually artist's studios, not living spaces. However, the current permitted use is for a warehouse. The property owner must discontinue the maintenance of an auto wrecking yard, artist's studios, and all other businesses other than warehouse use, including maintenance of the "caretaker's" dwelling unit, or obtain all required permits and final approval inspections for these uses. In addition, a structural and electrical inspection resulted in a separate Notice of Violation for changing the occupancy classification and for construction done without a building permit.

### **Moving Forward with the Neighborhood Business District Strategy**

We are pleased to note that no SEPA appeals were filed. We can now move forward with this legislation.

### **Waterfront Plan Update**

We are developing the staff recommended concept plan. We are scheduled to brief the UDP Committee on May 23, and will present the plan at public meetings co-sponsored with the Viaduct project team, during the week of June 21. We are also developing a project funding proposal to determine the resources needed for creation of a detailed Master Plan.

**Public Outreach ... Past Month and Future**

- April 26      “Building Healthy Communities, Dr. Richard Jackson, California Public Health Officer
- April 26      Northgate Stakeholders
- April 30      Home Improvement Workshop at the Safeco Neighborhood Academy on South Jackson
- May 2        “Inspiring Urban Revitalization,” Tom Bloxham, co-founder of Urban Splash, Manchester, UK
- May 9        “Civic Innovation and Sustainable Communities,” William Shutkin, President and CEO of The Orton Family Foundation
- June 6        “Public Spaces, Public Life,” Jan Gehl, architect, author and urban design professor, School of Architecture, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts